

Advisory Committee Meeting Minutes
November 16, 2021

Remote Meeting via Zoom

In Attendance: J. Strehle, G. Danis, N. MacDonald, D. Anderson, B. Black, D. Cooper, R. Curley, K. Dziergowski, M. Goulet, C. Kirk, A. Macdonald, A. McElaney, S. Melia, E. Sheehan, T. Sherwood, S. Nickerson.

Absent: None

1. Call Meeting to Order

At 7:02 pm, Chair Strehle, read the following statement:

“This meeting is being held remotely as an alternate means of public access pursuant to an Order issued by the Governor of Massachusetts dated March 12, 2020, Suspending Certain Provisions of the Open Meeting Law. You are hereby advised that this meeting and all communications during this meeting may be recorded by the Town of Hingham in accordance with the Open Meeting Law. If any participant wishes to record this meeting, please notify the Chairman at the start of the meeting in accordance with M.G.L. c. 30A, § 20(f) so that the Chair may inform all other participants of said recording.”

Chair Strehle asked if any participants were recording the meeting, no responses.

2. Comments from the Public Regarding Items Not on the Agenda

None.

3. Review and Approval of Minutes from October 12, 2021

The minutes from October 12, 2021, were approved with revisions by roll call vote 13-0-1.

4. Advisory Committee Handbook Update Discussion

Ms. Black and Ms. Sherwood presented suggested changes to the AdCom Handbook. There are seven parts; part 6 is the Financial Policy which is being looked at separately; part 5 are our Rules, which we updated last year. Ms. Black and Ms. Sherwood will make changes per the discussion.

5. Financial Policy Update Discussion

Vice Chair Danis, Mr. Curley, and Ms. Kirk are reviewing the AdCom Financial Policy.

There was discussion on several suggested changes including:

- There was a robust discussion on 'unused levy capacity.' Ms. Nickerson asked the intent of the paragraph as the Town cannot use unused levy capacity as it represents uncollected taxes. Changes were suggested to better reflect the flexibility that the policy provides for future decisions. Mr. Curley indicated he would review the language with the Select Board.
- The AdCom discussed the appropriate cost definition of a Capital Asset and should it be increased to \$15,000. Mr. Curley asked if there are unforeseen consequences to raising the definition. Ms. Nickerson offered that it would only create issues in years when the Town requires a level funded budget.
- There was a discussion regarding the School Department technology budget being funded through Capital Outlay, when much of the technology's useful life is less than 5 years. Mr. Goulet explained that the Capital Outlay Committee funds the School's technology budget at 20% a year, which implies 5 years.

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- Ms. Kirk questioned the climate language in the Capital Outlay section of the document and suggested it made more sense to put that language in the beginning of the document as a guidepost as the Town does not yet have a Climate Action Plan to guide Capital Outlay expenditures as the Climate Action Planning Committee was just formed this year. There was robust discussion as to how to best serve the Town's clear desire for climate action. Ms. Black said the vote at Town Meeting reflected the Town's commitment to the net-zero goal; the forthcoming plan will be the implementation. Ms. Cooper felt the language should remain in Capital Outlay because those expenditures will have the most impact. Mr. Curley will discuss this with the Select Board.

6. Liaison Reports

- a. Sustainable Budget Task Force
Vice Chair Danis – the Task Force has been meeting weekly. They are starting to do expense analysis. They are working towards an end of January final report. The School's Strategic Plan will be completed later this spring.
- b. ACES/Education/Foster School Building Committee
Mr. Anderson – the School Committee continues to work through their budgets. There continues to be a problem between the timing of the School Budget and the Strategic Plan
Mr. Sheehan – The School Building Committee has been meeting weekly. Preliminary designs were submitted last week to the MSBA. The Committee is currently working through issues with the Conservation Commission.
Mr. Danis – Mr. Estes of the School Building Committee confirmed that they will come to Town Meeting with a request for full funding, with a goal of opening the new Foster School in September 2024,
- c. Public Safety Facility
Ms. MacDonald – Schematic Design estimates are in and being reviewed. The Committee continues to have ongoing working sessions with both Chiefs to ensure the building will meet their needs. The current design is ~48,920SF and the rough estimate is \$39MM with the building opening in Fall 2024. This estimate is for construction and is not the total project cost; that number will be determined during the Design Document phase. They are anticipating a Warrant Article requesting Design Document funding.
- d. Community Preservation Committee (CPC)
Ms. MacDonald – 10 requests have been submitted. Tours of the projects were done on October 30th. Final presentations are Wednesday, November 17th. There are currently \$1.732MM in requests and ~\$1.283MM in available funds.
- e. South Shore Country Club (SSCC)
Mr. Macdonald – the current proposal is \$7mm. \$620k is estimated to make it 'bubble ready' with the expectation that the bubble would be added later. The Town needs to decide if they want a seasonal or year-round facility. There is an additional \$500k needed to purchase the bubble down the road. The pool is considered a 'Town Pool' and Town asset; the debt service is being requested of the Town and operations will continue to go through the Country Club Enterprise Fund. They are working on a Warrant Article for Town Meeting.

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Vice Chair Danis, Mr. Curley, and Ms. Kirk left the meeting to join the Select Board meeting in process to present the Financial Policy.

- f. Cleaner Greener
Ms. Sherwood – This was established as an eight-member committee but there are currently only four members. There is no proposed Warrant Article. The Committee has a charter and is working on a handbook.
- g. Climate Action Planning Committee (CAPC)
Ms. Black – the Committee is working on the Town's Climate Action Plan; they have divided into working groups to research a range of issues to be considered for the CAP.. Hingham Net Zero has approached the Town Administrator to propose a Sustainability Coordinator staff position. The CAPC is researching what sustainability coordinators in other towns are tasked to do and how such positions are funded, including possible State Funds..
- h. HMLP
Ms. Black – HMLP is expecting two Warrant Articles: one to transfer land to the HMLP for the proposed new substation and one to fund the construction of the substation and the underground cables to it. The first public information meeting was held in October. No public comments addressed any concern about the proposed location. Concerns regarding the cost (in a year with other expensive projects being considered) were raised and questions asked about whether there is a need for a redundant source of power and whether there is a need for more power capacity given that the Climate Action Plan has not been developed to date. HMLP will hold the second public information meeting on 11/18.
- i. Planning Board
Mr. McElaney – there are three Articles being considered for Town Meeting:
 - Flood plan overlay district maps – which the Town needs to adopt
 - Revising the Zoning By-law to make it gender neutral
 - Consolidating the special permitting processDiscussion is beginning on the Citizen's Petition regarding detached accessory dwellings; the Study Committee created by Town Meeting is not expected to report until next year.
- j. Hingham Affordable Housing Trust
Ms. Cooper – the property at Whiting St. has been conveyed to Habitat for Humanity. Existing buildings are being taken down. The Rhodes Circle property is in process; the next step is creating condominium documents and putting the units on the housing inventory. The Lincoln School apartment's window contract has been awarded. The Town has taken possession of the Ridgewood Crossing property. The property on Rockland/Hull Street is still under discussion.
- k. Energy Action Committee
Mr. Goulet – the Committee is also reviewing the need for a Sustainability Coordinator and if there is overlap with other positions that already exist in Town.

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7. Budget Process Overview

Chair Strehle reviewed the Budget Review Process for AdCom. The Budget Books will come out by the end of the month.

8. Discussion of Advisory Committee Housekeeping Items

Next meeting December 7th

9. Matters not anticipated within 48 hours of meeting

None

10. Adjourn

The meeting was adjourned at 10:00pm by roll call vote 11-0.

Documents Distributed for this Meeting

- Agenda
- Draft Minutes - 10/12/2021
- Sustainable Budget Task Force Update to the Select Board
- Financial Policy - Approved 6-19-2018 - Liza O'Reilly comments
- AdCom Assignments Chart
- AdCom Handbook v13 (11.9.2021) redline draft

Respectfully submitted,

Nancy MacDonald
Advisory Committee Secretary